

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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HINCHEY TELLS NRC CHAIRMAN INDIAN POINT NEEDS TO SHUT DOWN

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today joined U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (NY-17) and other members of New York's congressional delegation at a meeting with Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Richard Meserve. Hinchey expressed grave concerns about the emergency evacuation plan developed for the Indian Point nuclear facility in Buchanan, New York.

"Indian Point's evacuation plan is completely inadequate," said Hinchey. "It relies on outdated technology and fails to recognize the realities of modern terrorist threats. These serious problems confirm my belief that Indian Point needs to be decommissioned. Frankly, I don't think it's possible to create an effective evacuation plan at that site."

Following a very critical report by James Lee Witt, the former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the four counties surrounding the plant refused to certify the Indian Point's Radiological Emergency and Response Plan (RERP). Governor Pataki subsequently sent the report back to FEMA. On February 4, Hinchey wrote to current FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh urging that FEMA reject plan. FEMA has yet to announce its decision, but has asked the governor to certify the plan despite the opposition of the counties.

In his letter and in the meeting with Chairman Meserve, Hinchey pointed out the many deficiencies raised by the Witt report. He highlighted the plan's failure to properly evaluate potential releases from the spent fuel facilities and to take into account the special needs presented by the plant's location in a major metropolitan area. Hinchey also drew attention to the fact that emergency first responders and Indian Point guards themselves have no confidence in the plan.

"Virtually everyone who has a stake in this emergency evacuation plan has expressed serious doubts about its effectiveness," Hinchey added. "For FEMA to approve it in spite of that opposition would be the height of irresponsibility."